



MacIntyre

Providing support...your way

# **MacIntyre School and Children's Homes Complaints Procedure**

## Introduction

MacIntyre School and children's' homes want to provide the best possible service. We therefore welcome comments and complaints to help us improve our service. This policy covers MacIntyre School, its onsite children's Homes (Willow & Elm House, Children's Home and Maple and Oak, House Children's' Homes) and our off-site children's' home, Hillside Road in Leighton Buzzard and Woodland View in St Albans.

A complaint is when you are unhappy with something we have done, and want something done about it. The way the School and children's homes will manage complaints of all kinds will be:

- Honest, constructive and open.
- Timely.
- Consistent and fair, avoiding bias.
- Confidential and sensitive, with each complaint or comment being considered on its merit with due care being paid to individual differences and needs.

At all stages of the complaints procedure, MacIntyre will ensure that:

- No person who is the subject of a complaint takes any part in its consideration or investigation, except at the informal resolution stage if the registered person considers it appropriate.
- The Registered Manager will ensure that no child is subject to any reprisal for making a complaint or representation

## Complaints Procedure

There are three stages to our complaints procedure:

### Stage 1: Local/Informal Resolution

It is hoped that most complaints and concerns will be resolved quickly and informally. This is the stage most people find successful.

If you have a complaint directly related to a student/young person you should normally contact the relevant Teacher or Registered Manager. In many such cases, the matter will be resolved straight away.

- The Teacher or Registered Manager will make a written record of all concerns and complaints.
- If the Teacher or Registered Manager cannot resolve the matter alone, it may be necessary for them to consult the Head of Education or Regional Lead for Children's' Homes
- The Head of Operations, Head of Education or Regional Lead for Children's Homes will usually refer a complaint to the relevant Teacher or Registered Manager unless they consider it more appropriate to deal with the matter personally.
- If, however, your complaint is against the Head of Operations, you should contact the Group Director for Education and Children services directly.

- General complaints relating to the school should be addressed to the Head of Operations
- An initial response will be given within 3 working days. We will aim for a full resolution within 20 working days.
- If there are practical reasons why we cannot resolve the complaint within this time, we will contact you to agree a new time for us to get back to you.

## **Stage 2: Formal Resolution/Investigation**

If you are not satisfied with the way the complaint has been handled at the 'informal' stage, or the complaint is more 'formal' or raises serious issues, it will be passed on to the Head of Operations. In most cases, the Head of Operations will meet or speak to the person concerned, normally within three days of receiving the complaint, to discuss the matter. If possible, a resolution will be reached at this stage.

It may be necessary for the Head of Operations to carry out further investigations (or commission another Senior Manager to do so):

- The Head of Operations will write to you within 3 working days to acknowledge your complaint (including a written record of the complaint, if you made it in person or by telephone) and to tell you what is being done about it, including the name of the person who will investigate.
- Once the Head of Operations has established and considered the relevant facts, they will inform you of their decision (and the reasons for it) in writing within 20 working days.
- If there are practical reasons why we cannot resolve the complaint within this time, we will contact you to agree a new time for us to get back to you.
- The Head of Operations will keep written records of all meetings and interviews held in relation to the complaint.

If your complaint is against the Head of Operations, the Group Director of Education and Children's services will call for a full report from the Head of Operations and for all the relevant documents. The Group Director for Education and Children's services may also call for a briefing from members of staff, and will in most cases, speak to or meet with you to discuss the matter further. The same timescales will apply as above.

## **Stage 3: Appeal Panel**

If you are not happy with the results of the investigation, you can appeal to the Group Director of Education and Children's services, who will appoint a Complaints Panel to look carefully at what has happened:

- The Panel will consist of three MacIntyre personnel (at manager level or above) who were not directly involved in the matters detailed in the complaint, and where at least one panel member is independent of the management and running of the school.
- The Group Director of Education and Children's Services on behalf of the Panel, will then acknowledge the complaint and schedule a hearing to take place as soon as practicable and normally within 14 days.
- If the Panel deems it necessary, it may require that further particulars of the complaint or any related matter be supplied in advance of the hearing.
- Copies of such particulars shall be supplied to all parties not later than 3 working days prior to the hearing.
- You may attend the hearing and be accompanied to the hearing by one other person if you wish. This may be a relative, Teacher or friend. Legal representation will not normally be appropriate.

- If possible, the Panel will resolve the complaint immediately without the need for further investigation. Where further investigation is required, the Panel will decide how it should be carried out.
- After due consideration of all facts they consider relevant, the Panel will write to or email you informing you of its findings, its decision and of any recommendations, normally within 20 days of the hearing. It will copy the letter to the complainant, the Head of Operations the Group Director of Education and Children's services and, where relevant, the person complained about.
- **The decision of the Panel will be final.**

### **Independent process**

If you feel that MacIntyre School has not treated you fairly, or not done what we reasonably could, you may take your complaint to the local authority that pays for the student's place at the school.

If your complaint is that the school is not complying with legal regulations governing independent schools, you can contact Department for Education public enquiries on 0370 000 2288, or at [www.education.gov.uk/help/contactus](http://www.education.gov.uk/help/contactus) The Department is happy to take information from you, but will not investigate individual complaints, only look at regulatory issues

Ofsted is the official body for inspecting schools and children's homes. It cannot investigate or respond to individual complaints, but your feedback can be used to feed into their inspections.

Telephone: 0300 1234666- for children's homes

Website: [www.ofsted.gov.uk](http://www.ofsted.gov.uk)

Email: [enquiries@ofsted.gov.uk](mailto:enquiries@ofsted.gov.uk)

Ofsted's Whistleblowing Hotline may be contacted in three ways:

Telephone: **(0300 1233155** Monday to Friday from 8.00am to 6.00pm).

Email: [whistleblowing@ofsted.gov.uk](mailto:whistleblowing@ofsted.gov.uk).

Write to: WBHL, Ofsted, Piccadilly Gate, Store Street, Manchester M1 2WD

If you consider that a child at the school is at risk of or being abused, you should immediately contact Buckinghamshire Council's First Response Team on 01296 383962.

## Other ways to complain

If you do not feel able to raise your concern directly with the School, you can:

- Write to MacIntyre Head Office at: 602 South Seventh Street, Milton Keynes MK9 2JA
- Telephone the Head Office on 01908 230100
- Email your complaint to [hello@macintyrecharity.org](mailto:hello@macintyrecharity.org)
- You can download a copy of this leaflet from our website [www.macintyrecharity.org](http://www.macintyrecharity.org)

You can use any of these ways to complain anonymously. If you do, we will look seriously into your complaint, but obviously we will not be able to clarify the issues concerned with you or tell you what we will do in response.

## Recording complaints

The school or homes will keep a written record of all complaints, which may contain the following information:

- Date when the issue was raised
- Name of person making the complaint
- Name of student(s)
- Description of the issue
- Records of all the investigations (if appropriate)
- Witness statements (if appropriate)
- Name of member(s) of staff handling the issue at each stage
- Copies of all correspondence on the issue (including emails and records of phone conversation).

## Confidentiality

Correspondence, statements and records relating to individual complaints will be kept for 3 years confidentially except where the Secretary of State or a body conducting an inspection under section 162A of the Education Act 2002 (as amended) requests access to them, or under other legal authority.

## Compliance with legislation and guidance

This procedure has been drawn up in accordance with:

The Data Protection Act 2018 [Data Protection Act 2018 \(legislation.gov.uk\)](http://legislation.gov.uk)

The Education (Independent School Standards) Regulations 2019

[The Independent School Standards - Guidance for independent schools](http://publishing.service.gov.uk)

[\(publishing.service.gov.uk\)](http://publishing.service.gov.uk)

Education Act 2011 [Education Act 2011 \(legislation.gov.uk\)](http://legislation.gov.uk)

The Department for Education Best Practice advice for school complaints procedures 2020

[Best practice guidance for school complaints procedures 2020 - GOV.UK \(www.gov.uk\)](http://www.gov.uk)

Children's Homes Regulations 2015